

**REMARKS**

Examiner has restricted examination of claims 1-35 in this application. Specifically, the Examiner restricted claims 1-9 to Group I as being drawn to a retention clip, claims 10-19 and 32-35 to Group II as being drawn to a power strip, claims 20-27 to Group III as being drawn to a method of making a connector system, and claims 28-31 to Group IV as being drawn to a rack mounting system. The Examiner also requested Applicants to elect one of the following species: Species 1: Figures 1-4; or Species2: Figures 5-6.

After careful review of the Examiner's restriction requirement, the Applicants elect to prosecute claims 1-9 corresponding to Group I *with traverse*. More specifically, the Applicants object to the Examiner's rejection on the ground of a lack of "serious burden" on the Examiner. As set forth in the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, the criteria for a restriction requirement include: (1) the inventions must be independent or distinct, and (2) there must be a serious burden on the Examiner. See M.P.E.P. (Rev. 2, May 2004) §§ 802.02 and 803. Specifically, the Applicants stress that:

If the search and examination of an entire application can be made *without serious burden*, the examiner *must* examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to independent or distinct inventions.

*Id.* at § 803. After careful review of the present application, the Applicants stress that examination of all pending claims would not be a burden, much less a "serious burden," on the Examiner. If the Examiner reviews the claims in more than a cursory manner, then the Applicants believe that the Examiner will agree that the pending claims can reasonably be examined without need for the foregoing restriction requirement. For example, all of the claims include language regarding a clip or retainer to secure a plug to a power distribution unit or power strip. Accordingly, the Applicants stress that the Examiner will perform the same general prior art search regardless of the claim group. Although independent claim 28 further recites a rack structure, the Applicants do not believe that this contextual element will add any burden, much less a serious burden, on the Examiner during his search and examination of the claims. The Applicants find the foregoing restriction requirement unreasonable in view of the explicit claim language. The Applicants also emphasize that

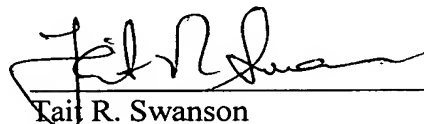
"[p]iecmeal examination should be avoided as much as possible." M.P.E.P. (Rev. 2, May 2004) § 707.07(g), Page 700-122. For these reasons, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the restriction requirement and examine all pending claims.

Regarding the election of species requirement, the Applicants elect to prosecute Species 1: Figures 1-4 *with traverse*. After careful review of the figures and the claims, the Applicants submit that claims 1-4, 7-18, and 20-27 all read on Species 1: Figures 1-4. The Applicants further submit that claims 1-3, 7-10, 12-18, 20, and 22-27, at the very minimum, are generic to these alleged species 1 and 2. For the same reasons discussed above, the Applicants believe that this election of species requirement should be withdrawn, and all claims should be examined on the merits. Again, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the election of species requirement and examine all pending claims.

If the Examiner believes that a telephonic interview will help speed this application toward issuance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: January 18, 2005

  
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Tai R. Swanson  
Reg. No. 48,226  
(281) 970-4545

**CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS:**  
Intellectual Property Administration  
Legal Department, M/S 35  
HEWLETT-PACKARD COMPANY  
P.O. Box 272400  
Fort Collins, CO 80527-2400